

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Day of General Discussion

Friday, 28 September 2001 – OHCHR (Palais Wilson, Geneva)

Violence Against Children within the Family and in Schools

Submission by **Article 12**

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN WITHIN THE FAMILY

Statement by Article 12, a UK-wide organisation run by and for children and young people actively promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the child, especially the right of every child and young person under the age of eighteen to have a voice that is heard and respected.

As an organisation committed to promoting the rights of the child, we believe that all of the articles of the Convention must become a reality for ALL children and young people. We believe that the issue of violence against children is still an issue not being taken seriously by our government.



Violence is an every day experience for most children living in the UK. As clearly stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child all forms of physical punishment are wrong and should not be allowed. When states agree to implement the Convention they agree to promote and protect the Convention's principles. Yet for so long smacking has been the acceptable way to discipline children, and little efforts have been made by the Government to make Article 19 a reality for the people it is designed to protect.

The government must begin to take positive steps forward in making our right to protection from violence a key right that is recognised, respected, implemented, one that carries weight and violations of it need to be challenged. There needs to be a cultural change in the way people view violence in our society, and the way that society views children.

This should go hand-in-hand with children's rights education in schools. Children need to know that they have this right to protection. At the moment the law is unclear and young people don't know where they stand. They don't know how much they have to put up with before they will be given help.

Services are too geared to dealing with serious child abuse, and although this is obviously very important, we don't believe that the children suffering serious abuse will get the protection they deserve, until the law is clear and protects all children from all levels of abuse and violence.

We believe that this is such an important subject, and it is something that children and young people deeply care about. In April 2000, about 200 children and young people and supporting adults held a 'stop smacking us' day. We marched from the Houses of Parliament to 10 Downing Street to protest for our right under Article 19 to be respected.



The day was a huge success, and we hope it will have brought the issue back into public discussion.

For more information call Article 12 on 0207 843 6026 or email james@article12.com Visit us online at <http://www.article12.com>

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states...

The child's right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure affecting the child